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ABSTRACT

The study was developed to help lay religious education teachers develop the necessary skills, methods, and strategies to improve their effectiveness. The review of literature and interview results provide information from the areas of professional education and religious education. The review of literature and interview results were compiled into a guide for lay religious education teachers. This guide demonstrates examples of effective lesson planning techniques and various teaching strategies which can be directly applied to the religious education classroom. The interview instruments are appended. (Author/AA)

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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLASSROOM GUIDE FOR LAY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

by
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Bachelor of Science, West Virginia University, 1972

An Independent Study

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . v

ABSTRACT . . . . . vi

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

CHAPTER II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES . . . . . 21

CHAPTER III. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS . . . . . 26

CHAPTER IV. GUIDE FOR LAY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS . . . . . 31

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW INSTRUMENTS . . . . . 77

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 80

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ABSTRACT

The present study was developed to help lay religious education teachers develop the skills, methods and strategies needed to become effective religious education teachers. The review of literature and interview results provide information from the areas of professional education and religious education. The review of literature and interview results were compiled into a guide for lay religious education teachers. This guide demonstrates, with examples, an effective lesson planning technique and various teaching strategies which can be directly applied to the religious education classroom.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Catechesis is an esteemed term in Christian Tradition. It's purpose is to make a person's faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction (National Council of Catholic Bishops, 1979).

Because of the decreasing numbers of priests, sisters and deacons in the Roman Catholic Church, the religious education of children in parishes today has become the responsibility of parishioners. Parishioners who become lay religious education teachers (catechists) demonstrate varying levels of knowledge regarding the practices of teaching religious education. Lay religious educators need instruction in the skills, methods, and strategies necessary to become effective religious education teachers.

The lay religious education teacher is a volunteer who serves as catechist. He/She is assigned a grade level and given a teacher's manual and a student book for each child. He/She is then expected to follow the teacher's manual and instruct children in the teachings of the Catholic faith.

The development of this study in effective lesson planning techniques and teaching strategies came about because of direct contact with catechists and observing their inability to prepare for teaching. This paper will help fill the needs of lay religious education teachers by

providing a manual in the areas of effective lesson planning and teaching strategies.

## Review of Literature

The religious education in many parishes today has become the responsibility of parishoners. Parishoners who become lay religious education teachers (catechists) demonstrate varying levels of knowledge regarding the practices of teaching religious education. Careful planning of lessons is an important practical step in becoming an effective catechist. As demonstrated by Janaan Manternach and Carl J. Pfeifer (1983), this careful planning allows the catechist to do the following:

1. Deepen their own awareness of the faith-reality they will be exploring and sharing with students.
2. Sensitize themselves to the wealth of resources available in daily experiences, the news media and their own textbooks.
3. Collect materials for use in their own teaching.
4. More closely weave their catechetical work with the rest of their lives (p. 77).

Many religious educators such as Sr. M. Berenice Trachta (1963) and Manternach (1983) see lesson planning as a three stage process: long range planning, short range planning, and immediate range planning. The long range planning is an overview of the entire year's work. The textbooks, both the teacher's and the student's, should be examined to familiarize oneself with the approach used throughout the book. Sr. Trachta, in 1963, wrote that these books were prepared by experienced catechetical teachers and the curriculum guides were designed to give unity and direction to the entire religious education

program, to insure adequate coverage of essential material, and to prevent unnecessary duplication as well as fragmented, unrelated instruction (p. 219).

Next, the teacher should focus on the major theme accented throughout the units, chapters, and individual lessons. Generally, the textbook series contains a profile for the age groups to be taught. This profile describes the physical, mental, social and spiritual development of the particular age group of children. Furthermore, this profile contains the vital statistics needed in order to effectively plan a lesson. These vital statistics, together with the themes developed throughout the year and the profile for each age group, provide the essentials for long range planning.

According to Trachta (1963), "short range planning involves units of work and is designed to implement the long range plan" (p. 218). The catechist can begin to sharpen his/her view of the major themes used throughout the text. Depending upon the format of the text in regard to units and chapters, short range planning could involve a month to six weeks in time. Carefully studying the material to be taught, the catechist can begin to formulate ideas toward specific topics, gather materials and resources to supplement the lessons, and begin relating personal experiences toward the themes of the lessons.

Immediate planning is the actual planning of an individual religion lesson. Manternach (1983) recommends that the catechist explore the theme of the lesson first through the eyes of the child (p. 78). This can be accomplished by reading the material for the specific lesson in the student's book. The teacher can gain insight into how the student

will view the lesson and the material to be internalized. The teacher's manual provides background information, tradition and doctrine, resources and materials to enhance the lesson. Combining the ideas received from the student's book and the teacher's manual, the lesson can be prepared.

Trachta (1963) describes the first day of school as the most important for the teacher. She offers these five points when preparing for the first day:

1. Determine definitely the handling of such routine matters as seating arrangement, roll call, entering and leaving the classroom.
2. Decide the approach to be used, for instance, whether to discuss the religion course and general procedures for the year, or to call on pupils to relate some interesting experience of the summer vacation.
3. Determine the information to be given the pupils on the objectives and how this will be presented.
4. Decide information to be given about textbooks and other learning materials the pupils will use during the course of the year.
5. Determine what to say about the nature and extent of pupil participation in planning and learning activities (p. 223).

The immediate lesson planning technique proposed by Manternach (1983) is called a Personalized Lesson Plan. These authors feel this technique can "help catechists draw upon the sound curriculum process and structure of their textbooks while inviting them to develop their own creative resources" (p. 79). The PLP (Personalized Lesson Plan) is

divided into three major movements, plus space to describe the aim or objective and space for after class notes. Manternach uses these major movements in the Personalized Lesson Plan: Exploring Life, Sharing Tradition and Integrating Life and Tradition.

In developing the three movements, the catechist must rely heavily on the teacher's manual. However, to personalize the lesson planning process, the teacher must also rely on his/her own experiences and creativity. The catechist may want to select from suggested examples, omit activities or replace certain activities with alternate options.

Manternach's first movement, Exploring Life (p. 80), begins once the catechist has formulated the aim of the lesson. Using the textbook as a security base, the teacher then selects activities to help the children explore their own experiences. Exploring the life of the student and the teacher is a time of sharing and guidance between the class members based upon the background the children bring to class.

Sharing Tradition (p. 81), Manternach's second movement is that aspect in the teaching scheme when the catechist relates to the children the Catholic religious traditions. "This movement must directly relate to and build upon the experiences in the Exploring Life movement of planning" (p. 81). The tradition of the church can be related through scripture, a liturgical symbol, or through a moral teaching. "This part of the lesson is to bring Jesus' call directly to bear on the children's experiences" (p. 81).

The third movement, Integrating Life and Tradition (p. 81), is where specific teaching activities are selected in order to combine the two previous movements. Many activities are provided in the teacher's manual;

however, the catechist needs to personalize the activities to his/her class to achieve the aim of the lesson.

The final step in planning this lesson, according to Manternach (1983) is to estimate the time for each activity. Discovering the mistakes and strengths of the lesson is to evaluate it and write about the lesson on the lesson plan in the after class notes. Using this Personalized Lesson Plan (PLP), the catechist "draws upon the strengths of the textbooks, while adapting what is there toward his/her own situation" (p. 83).

Donald L. Griggs (1983) describes lesson planning as "building the bridge between the concept of the lessons and the objective of the lesson" (p. 36). He recommends these four essential components for the lesson planning process:

1. First, we consider the key concepts to be focused upon in a session or unit. This is one way to respond to the question, "What am I going to teach?"
2. Second, we compare the differences between the general goal and specific instructional objectives concluding that determinining objectives for teaching is crucial to the planning process.
3. Third, we focus on four different levels of teaching activities with the observation that there are many, many different activities that can be selected for involving students in learning. We answer the question, "What teaching activities will I plan for the session?"
4. Fourth, we identify a wide variety of resources that are available that can be used by teachers and students to make teaching

and learning a very involving and interesting experience. The question, "What resources will the student and I use?" (p. 36)

Griggs (1983) further suggests examples for each of the four components essential to the lesson planning process. In step one, the catechist is to select the main idea he/she wants to focus on for the lesson. Griggs offers the following examples:

1. Jesus called twelve men to become his apostles.
2. Other persons who learned from Jesus and followed him were called disciples.
3. A disciple is a person who follows and learns from someone else. The word is used in the New Testament of the followers of John the Baptist and Paul, but especially of the followers of Jesus.
4. Peter, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, Matthew, Judas, and five other men were the twelve apostles.
5. The apostles continued Jesus' ministry after his death.
6. In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles there are many accounts of the work the apostles did to establish the church.
7. The apostles had difficulties in understanding Jesus' work and teachings and many times asked him questions, were unfaithful in their following, or argued among themselves.
8. The apostles were very enthusiastic about and committed to the work Jesus called them to do and many times spoke and acted fearlessly.

9. Jesus needs disciples to serve him today by speaking and acting in the world to bring love, peace, justice and health to mankind.
10. There are persons today who are acting like disciples in the early church.
11. The problems and circumstances of today are in many ways similar to those in the days of the disciples (p. 37).

For step two, the catechist is to select the objectives which would be appropriate for the main ideas already selected. Griggs (1983) proposed the following examples:

At the end of the session, the students should be able to:

1. Define in their own words the meaning of disciple, apostle, called, learn, and follow.
2. Name the twelve apostles that Jesus chose.
3. Identify four of the apostles and describe several important characteristics or actions of each.
4. Explain the difference between disciple and apostle.
5. Locate three places in the New Testament where the twelve apostles are listed.
6. Locate at least six passages of scripture that describe some of the actions of the apostles.
7. Describe some of the problems the apostles had in following Jesus.
8. Identify with the feelings the disciples had when they learned Jesus was crucified.
9. Suggest some examples of ways persons are speaking and acting today as disciples.

10. Apply the meaning of discipleship in the New Testament to the needs of the world today.
11. Decide on several ways they can be disciples in their homes, school, and neighborhood (p. 38).

With regard to step three, Griggs (1983) asks the catechist to select teaching activities that will help communicate the main ideas and achieve the objectives. Examples of these teaching activities are:

1. State key questions and do research in the New Testament and other resource books.
2. Investigate one or more key persons by reading key passages of scripture and other resource books.
3. See filmstrip on the twelve apostles and look for important events, relationships with Jesus, and/or personal experiences and characteristics.
4. Write a script for a filmstrip about the apostles of Jesus.
5. Create slides to illustrate a story about Jesus and the disciples.
6. Listen to or read a story about Jesus and disciples in his day; and in our day.
7. Write a story about experiences persons have in trying to follow Jesus.
8. Search in magazines or newspapers to find examples of modern disciples of Jesus.
9. Work on values clarification strategy of rank order, voting, or values continuum to focus on disciples and discipleship.
10. Use magazines to make a collage or montage, to mount teaching pictures to photograph for slides, or to do picture lifting

for slides or transparencies.

11. Do some informal role play or dramatics.
12. Discuss some situations where disciples needed today and decide ways to act as disciples (p. 39).

Griggs (1983) proposes in step four that the catechist select resources which are necessary to complete the activities that are planned. Examples of these resources are:

1. Copies of the New Testament for each student.
2. Several copies each of People of the Bible, Young Readers Bible Dictionary, Concise Concordance, and Golden Bible Atlas.
3. Filmstrip. Into All The World, parts 1 and 2. An Overview of the New Testament, Persons and Events.
4. Overhead projector with all necessary materials and screen.
5. Cassette tape recorder with all necessary materials and screen.
6. Write-On Slides or Write On Filmstrip material with pens and pencils.
7. Box of newspapers and magazines, scissors, glue, and construction paper.
8. Blank paper or felt pens.
9. Cassette tape recording: Call of Disciples from "Thesis Tapes," P.O. Box 11724, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.
10. A set of teaching pictures on Jesus and the apostles.
11. Materials to create puppets (p. 40).

Griggs (1983) additionally suggests that the actual worksheets (lesson plan) be divided into these sections: Main Idea, Instructional Objectives (including time, teaching activities, resources), Presenting, Exploring the Subject, Responding Creatively and Concluding (p. 41).

Betty Hamilton (1981) advocates these nine parts to check when concentrating on lesson planning:

1. Prepare a statement of aims and objectives.
2. Welcome the class.
3. Include prayer in all lessons.
4. Relate new material to previous lesson.
5. Relate the lesson to real life experiences.
6. Present the doctrine - the message.
7. Suggest one activity that reinforces the doctrinal message.
8. Make sure the relationship between the activities and the message is clear to the students.
9. Have a definite closing ritual (p. 54).

The implementation of effective teaching strategies in the religious education classroom is an additional measure catechists must demonstrate in order to be effective religious educators. Four effective teaching strategies or methods have been chosen for examination in this study. These four teaching strategies (questioning, discussion, audio-visual media and writing) are a sample of the vast number of effective teaching strategies available to the classroom teacher.

The National Council of Catholic Bishops (1979) have described the methodology implemented in the religious education classroom in this manner:

> Catechesis is not limited to one methodology. Although certain norms or criteria apply to all catechesis, they do not determine a fixed methodology, nor even an order for presenting the truths of faith. For instance, catechesis can begin with God and proceed to Christ, or do the reverse; it can proceed from God to humanity, or from humanity to God; and so on (p. 101).
>
> Whatever the method, catechists are responsible for choosing and creating conditions which will encourage people to seek and accept the Christian message and integrate it more fully in their living of faith (p. 101).
>
> Although even the best preparation for catechetical ministry will have little effect without the action of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of catechists and those being catechized, catechists should certainly seek to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate the gospel message effectively. They must have a solid grasp of Catholic doctrine and worship, familiarity with scripture; communication skills; the ability to use various methodologies; understanding of how people grow and mature and of how persons of different ages and circumstances learn (p. 128).

Manterach (1983) applies the phrase creative activities in relation to effective teaching strategies. "There is no absolute way to assure that all the activities used in a class or a series of classes will work, but there is a way to assure the possibility of success" (p. 60). Six criteria are suggested to measure learning and creative activities for success:

1. Purposeful. An activity's purposefulness rests in the stated aim that a lesson has. Activities should be a means to achieve a lesson's aim. Each activity, in terms of the purpose, has to be able to either set the stage or prepare the soil, or focus the issue, or introduce the problem, or provide the solution.
2. In Proportion. Some activities are more important than others in a given lesson. The amount of time should normally be proportionate to the particular activity's importance to the lesson.

3. Personal. In terms of the children, most of the activities that are in a teacher's manual will be generally geared to the average psychological age and pedagogical needs of the particular group. However, in every group, the personal dimensions that need to be considered are the ethnic backgrounds of some or many in the class, the experiential largeness or smallness of their everyday worlds, and the overriding positive or negative attitudes toward God and religion, themselves and others. We have gradually learned that the kinds we find easy to personalize are those that involve story, poetry, drawing, creative writing, singing, and the study of photos and art masterpieces.

4. Penetrating. The penetrating activity becomes a powerful tool, a perfect vehicle through which profound sharing and real discovering can take place. When an activity is penetrating, it affects the inner vision, the soul, the spirit and that's why it tends to be indefinable.

5. In Continuity. Continuitu has to flow from something and lead to something else. Nothing transforming can be done in an active and productive way with children unless it hinges upon what they have already done or experienced; unless it is informed by and bears some of the coloring of where they are experientially, socially and educationally.

6. Completing. An activity has to be a gathering kind of experience. An activity gives evidence of this potential if it pulls together for the children both knowns and unknowns, if

participation in it is challenging, and if the outcome for each child is not completely anticipated (pp. 60-62).

Questioning is one of the four effective teaching strategies discussed in this study. It is one of the most important resources of learning which teachers have available to them. Griggs (1983) offers these ways which questioning can be used in the classroom.

1. Stimulate a discussion of a familiar subject.
2. Introduce a new subject.
3. Review a subject studied previously.
4. Reflect on some personal experiences.
5. Connect a biblical subject to some personal experinces
6. Interpret a biblical passage.
7. Motivate further research on a subject.
8. Evaluate a film, filmstrip, recording, etc.
9. Probe further into a subject.
10. Analyze a personal or social problem.
11. Debrief a simulation game or other activity.
12. Brainstorm solution to a problem or issue.
13. Interview a guest resource person.
14. Consider possible alternative actions or individuals.
15. Clarify the values persons express.
16. Explore beliefs and commitments of persons (pp. 47, 48).

Typically, in most classroom situations, the teacher formulates the questions and the students respond in a brief, simple manner. Depending upon the response, the teacher notes the answer and formulates another question. Griggs (1983) offers these helpful hints for asking

questions:

1. Ask questions that are more open than closed.
2. Ask only one question at a time.
3. Present questions to the whole class.
4. Provide feedback after a student responds.
5. After an initial question and response, follow up with probing questions.
6. After asking a question, be silent.
7. Use an inquiry style rather than an interrogation style.
8. Encourage students to ask their own questions.
9. Avoid echoing student responses.
10. Accept student responses as if they were gifts (pp. 52,53).

The art of questioning requires practice and on-the-job training. Teachers need to formulate questions ahead of time because questioning requires concentration, careful planning and patience. Karen K. Wixson (1983) writes, "It is important to recognize that student's interactions with questions have a direct impact on their learning" (p. 291).

In general, teacher's questions can be categorized into four major classifications: cognitive recall, convergent divergent and evaluative (Griggs, 1983, p. 48). Cognitive recall simply asks for specific facts from a particular material, i.e., book, lecture, film, etc. Convergent questions utilize common information to prove a point or support a generalization. Divergent questions make use of some known information as a starting point, but the answer moves in some other direction. Evaluative questions seek to use known information to reach some kind of value judgment.

Manterach (1983) suggests that there are four kinds of important questions: factual questions, meaning questions, value questions, and limit or faith questions (pp. 119, 120, 121). These four kinds of questions are designed to relate directly to the religious education classroom.

Factual questions are important to catechesis because our Christian faith is historical. Answers to these questions provide the student with background data for deeper probling of our faith heritage. Meaning questions ask "why" or "what does this mean?". Meaning questions challenge the students to reflect more deeply. Value questions are more personalized meaning questions. The answers to value questions involve one's understanding or belief and what one considers important.

These questions need to be asked with respect in an atmosphere of trust. Limit or faith questions stretch the mind and opens the heart to God's revelation. These questions do not have conclusive apparent answers.

Discussion is the second of the four effective teaching strategies discussed in this study. Discussion is a teaching strategy or technique which goes beyond the art of questioning. J. T. Dillon (1981) feels that discussion is the transmitting or exchanging of knowledge of a factual or conventional type. The material for discussion is not factual itself, but its applications, implications, interpretations, and the like (p. 53).

Mary M. Kitagawa (1982) advocates that in order to have quality discussions, students need to be granted autonomy in initiating questions. The responses are evaluated either in a spoken or nonspoken manner.

The response often creates another question. Students need to understand that any question would be considered in a discussion as long as the asker would "generally like to know the answer" (p. 43).

Kitagawa (1982) further suggests that children can be placed in a questioning role and the discussion can lead to high level thinking (p. 42). Griggs (1983) offers two types of higher-level questions: personal level of questions and analytical level of questions (p. 49).

Personal level of questions are not invading a person's privacy. They are, however, relating to a person's own life experience. These questions can effectively engage students in thinking, reflecting, expressing and acting on concerns they relate to personally. Analytical level of questions require students to think before they respond. There are no right answers to analytical level of questions. The ideas and ideals they express should be accepted. The individual and collective responses of students shape their self-expression, personal viewpoints, and values.

Audio-visual media is the third of the four effective teaching strategies discussed in this study. Audio-visual media is a collective term used to describe records, cassettes, films, filmstrips, slides, etc. Griggs (1983) feels audio-visual media should be used creatively in the classroom and that it is imperative for teachers in the church to seek creative, effective ways to motivate students to become actively involved in the process of their own learning (p. 54). He offers these seven statements to encourage teachers to no longer depend upon traditional teaching techniques and to become aware of multi-media resources:

1. Teachers must assume responsibility for selecting or designing resources that are appropriate to their students.
2. Some of the most effective resources and activities are the ones the teacher discovers or designs.
3. Students learn in many ways. A few learn well with verbal activities, many learn well with visual activities, but most students learn best when verbal and visual activities are combined.
4. Visual compositions are just as valid as verbal compositions.
5. Audio-visual materials and equipment are not just tools for the teacher. They are also tools for the students.
6. There are risks involved in using media equipment and resources, but the risks are worth it.
7. Teachers and students must experiment and practice with media in order to use it creatively and effectively (pp. 54,55).

In catechesis, the goal is to guide the students to deepen their faith by creative expression and at the same time share their faith through the media they create. The creative use of media requires careful planning. Manternach (1983) suggests these points to consider when using media:

1. Relation to program - The media used must fit into the aim and theme of the particular lesson.
2. Determination of theme - Carefully think out the single theme, question or issue to be explored.
3. Clarity of aim - The media selected and the way it is used can differ significantly if the aim is to inform or to entertain

to motivate or to stimulate reflection, to spark discussion or raise questions.

4. Pre-visualization - Once the theme and aim is clearly in mind, previsualize the whole presentation step-by-step.
5. Timing - The development of the media presentation has been formalized; time it.
6. Criticism beforehand - This allows parts to be altered or changed and to feel the effect of the presentation on the class (p. 90).

The National Council of Catholic Bishops (1979) sees the use of audio-visual media and catechesis in the following manner:

> The collaboration of the arts and media deserves close attention and encouragement. From the very beginning, the church has used the arts to communicate Christ's message and fix it in people's minds and hearts. Biblical stories, saint's lives, and religious themes of all sorts have been depicted in stained glass, mosaics, painting, and sculpture. Music, poetry, dance, drama, architecture and other art forms have also served catechetical purposes. Contemporary media such as television, films, photography, filmstrips, slides, and tapes do so today (p. 154).

Writing is the fourth effective teaching strategy to be discussed in this study. Writing is a teaching strategy which can be developed for a variety of purposes or contexts. Each style of writing (story, poem, etc.) can be achieved for different goals or objectives.

Barry K. Beyer and Robert Gilstrap (1982) suggest that writing has three sound features. First, it must provide for sequential skill development across grade levels. Second, it must integrate skills with subject matter instruction. Third, it must explicitly provide for direct instruction in both writing and subject matter (p. 179).

Donald Graves (1983) offers these points for consideration when asking children to write:

1. Writing is a natural process.
2. When children are given paper and told, "You can write on this now," they do not know they can't write.
3. Ask children to write about a personal experience.
4. The teacher should write at the same time as the class.
5. In fifteen minutes, walk around and help students by asking questions.
6. Gather the class together and ask children to share their topics (p. 3).

Graves (1983) further suggests that teachers should learn to read their children. Know their backgrounds and interests. Keep a list of topics for each child during times when topics are not readily available. Keep a writing folder for each child containing paper for editing and revising. Publish what the children have written. Try to write regularly. Spell words for the children only when they ask. And, make the child feel in control of his/her writing (p. 22).

Manternach (1983) feels that in the religious education classroom, writing facilitates faith learning. Writing helps bring each learner into the learning experience. The children's hearts and imaginations as well as their brains are involved with class content (pp. 117, 118). These authors also feel that writing remains one of the most readily available methods of helping students explore and share their experiences, insights, feelings and faith (p. 119).

## CHAPTER II

## PROCEDURES AND METHODS

The development of this study on effective lesson planning techniques and teaching strategies came about because of direct contact with lay religious education teachers and observing their inability to prepare for teaching. The lay religious education teacher is generally a volunteer who serves as catechist. He/She is assigned a grade level and given a teacher's manual and student book for each child. He/She is then expected to follow the teacher's manual and instruct children in the teachings of the Catholic faith.

The quality and quantity of time spent in preparation for the lesson and actually teaching the lesson is essential. Most religious education classes are held for one hour to one hour and one-half, one day a week. Based on two essential needs of the lay religious education teacher, effective lesson planning and teaching strategies, research was undertaken in order to compile a manual for lay religious education teachers. This research was initiated in two ways: a review of current professional literature and interviews with both professional educators and religious educators.

The review of current professional literature for this study concentrated on the areas of lesson planning and teaching strategies. Background information was gained from The National Catechetical Directory. This source provided the foundation for further research. General

education reference sources were searched for journal articles from 1980 to the present date under these subject headings: religious education, Catholic educators, catechetics, Catholic Church education, religious education - Catholic, teachers - Catholic schools, religious education teachers - education. The reference sources searched were: Education Index, Research In Education, Current Index to Journals in Education and Educational Resources Informational Center.

The review of literature pertaining specifically to effective lesson planning was researched from sources only containing religion's education information. This concentrated effort was undertaken because of the aspects of scripture, doctrine and prayer which are valuable components of an effective lesson plan for the religious education class. Recommended sources for this literature review were provided from publishers of Catholic education materials. No specific dates of publication were considered for these information sources.

Four teaching strategies were identified: questioning, discussion, audio-visuals and writing. The review of literature followed by searching general education sources for information on each teaching strategy. These sources were searched for journal articles from 1980 to the present date under these subject headings: questioning, discussion, audio-visuals --use and writing. The reference sources searched were: Education Index, Research in Education, Current Index to Journals in Education and Educational Resources Informational Center. Additional literature sources were obtained through the card catalog and from lists of recommended books and from publishers of Catholic education materials.

The interview procedure was a three-step process: designing the interview instruments, performing the interviews and compiling the results of the interviews. Two interview instruments were designed. One was presented to three professional educators and the second was presented to three religious educators. The interview instruments can be found in Appendix A of this study.

The interviewing instrument for the professional educators contained six questions. The questions were designed in a sequential manner to create a flow from the general to the specific. The introduction statement identified the purpose of the interview and the classroom setting. The six questions were formulated.

The first two questions of the interview instrument dealt with the elements of effective lesson planning. Question three requested responses on specific teaching strategies. The fourth and fifth questions became more centralized in nature because these questions focused specifically on the effective lesson planning techniques and appropriate teaching strategies to be used in the religious education classroom. The final question was designed to summarize the interview and give the interviewee an opportunity for additional comments.

The interviewing instrument for the religious educators contained five questions. These questions were designed to solicit responses specifically in the subject area of religious education. The introduction statement identified the purpose of the interview and the classroom setting. The five questions were formulated.

Questions one and two asked for essential steps in developing an effective lesson plan in religious education. The third question focused

on appropriate or effective teaching strategies. Question four asked the religious educator to base his/her response on personal experience and state which teaching strategies have been the most effective. The final question requested additional comments form the religious educator which would be helpful in preparing the manual.

As a means of soliciting information on general lesson planning procedures and effective teaching strategies, three professional educators were interviewed. Each of these professional educators has extensive teaching and supervising experience. Two of the professional educators are presently faculty members of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota preparing undergraduate students for classroom teaching. The third professional educator is a graduate student and supervisor of student teachers. The latter has eighteen years of elementary classroom experience.

Each professional educator was personally asked to participate in this study. Having verbally agreed to be interviewed, a time and date was arranged for the interviews. A week prior to the interviews a confirmation letter was mailed reinterating the time, date and information which would be solicited. Each interview proceeded on schedule and was audio-taped.

The interviews began with an introduction of myself and an explanation of the purpose of the study. The professional educator was advised to respond to the questions with specific answers and encouraged to elaborate and offer examples. Furthermore, if any question was not understood by the professional educator, he/she was urged to ask for the question to be repeated or explained in detail. The introduction

statement was read and the interview proceeded.

Each interview progressed as scheduled and no complications were encountered. Each professional educator was thanked for his/her cooperation and interest in participating in this study. A follow-up letter of thanks was mailed a week following each interview.

As a means of soliciting information on lesson planning and effective teaching strategies in the religious education classroom, three religious educators were interviewed. Each of these religious educators has been a catechist and all three are presently Directors of Religious Education in parishes throughout the Grand Forks area. Two have studied at the college level but have no professional teaching credentials. One is a professional educator in early childhood and elementary education with an additional degree in Christian Ministry.

Identical procedures were followed before, during, and after the interviews of the religious educators as was previously documented for the professional educators. The results of all six interviews were compared and contrasted. The common elements of lesson planning and effective teaching strategies were identified and can be found in chapter three of this study.

## CHAPTER III

## RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted as a means of soliciting information on effective lesson planning and teaching strategies. Three professional educators and three religious educators were interviewed. Two interviewing instruments (see Appendix A) were designed; one for professional educators and one for religious educators. The responses to the questions regarding lesson planning and teaching strategies were similar whether the educators were professional or religious. The results of the interviews were compared and contrasted and common elements were identified.

### Lesson Planning

Five common elements of an effective lesson plan became apparent throughout the interviews: preparation, goals and objectives, procedures, application and evaluation. Two religious educators and one professional educator differed on the terms used to describe the elements of lesson planning. However, the definitions of these terms coincided with the five common elements of lesson planning. The terms used to designate preparation were previewing and reflection. The terms used to designate procedure were development and processes.

The element of prayer in effective lesson planning was proposed by all three religious educators and not suggested by any of the professional

educators. To the religious educators, prayer is a significant element of lesson planning. Prayer needs to be prepared and planned as sufficiently as any other element of lesson planning. The religious educators suggested various styles of prayer to be considered when planning the lesson rote or memorized prayer, spontaneous prayer, intercessions and prayers of thanksgiving.

Preparation for lesson planning was identified as the first element to be considered in lesson planning. The teacher should have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Professionals should be sought or additional reading done if further knowledge is needed to understand the information to be taught.

The cultural background of the community and students in the class should be taken into consideration as an element of preparation. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development of each child is additional information which directly reflects the preparation of the lesson. Children with special problems need to be discussed with the teacher by the supervisor before-hand to insure the teacher's awareness of the problem. Suggestions for special planning could then be offered to insure success for each child in the class.

Setting goals and objectives is the next step recognized from the interviews in effective lesson planning. One professional educator proposed this question as a means of designing the goal or objective of the lesson: What do I want these students to know? This professional educator further explained how the goal of the lesson should assure success. The goal should be readily attainable. One religious educator pointed out how the teacher's manuals generally state a goal

or objective for each lesson; however, the goal should be modified in order to meet the needs in each particular class.

The procedure of the lesson is the third step recognized from the interviews in effective lesson planning. The procedure directly relates to the individual teaching style of each teacher. It is during this phase of lesson planning when the teacher chooses specific teaching strategies that will supplement the learning of the subject matter by the students. One religious educator labeled this step in lesson planning as the "meat" of the planning because it is here that the religious education teacher introduces scripture and doctrine to further enhance the goal or objective of the lesson.

Application is the fourth step identified from the interviews in effective lesson planning. Application is internalizing the new information and applying it directly to one's life. The student needs to see either through modeling by the teacher or by sharing his/her own personal experiences how the subject matter can be carried over between the home, school, and church.

Parent notes were suggested by one professional educator and one religious educator. These parent notes would explain the lesson and would be a means of involving the family with the lesson. Activities which would involve the whole family could be suggested and thereby the lesson could be reinforced in the home.

Evaluation is the final element of a successful lesson plan identified from the interviews. Answering the questions suggested by one professional educator will help facilitate the evaluation process. The questions are, "What did you (the students) learn today?; What went

right?; What went wrong?; How do I correct the problem?"

The professional educator further proposed that through the evaluation of the lesson individual teaching styles become apparent and the evaluation results should be drawn upon when preparing for the planning of the next lesson.

Unanimously, all the professional educators and religious educators agreed the differences in grade level or age of the class plays a significant role in how a lesson plan should be structured. The developmental processes of children at all ages directly relates to planning the lesson.

## Teaching Strategies

Both the professional educators and religious educators were asked to provide appropriate or effective teaching strategies which could be used in the subject matter of religious education. The professional educators responded with these strategies: discussion, questioning, modeling, role-playing, audio-visuals, drawing, writing and manipulatives. One professional educator felt learning centers could be designed in the area of religious education and used on a continuous basis for supplemental activities.

One professional educator firmly believes that three total lessons including resources and materials should be prepared ahead of time for emergency use. In the event a teaching strategy fails or no time was available for lesson planning, a complete lesson or part of a lesson could be easily implemented on the spot.

The religious educators said they basically relied on the teaching strategies suggested within the teacher's manual for a particular lesson.

These strategies included questioning, drawing, audio-visuals, puppetry, storytelling and flannel boards.

## CHAPTER IV

## CLASSROOM GUIDE FOR LAY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

A classroom guide for lay religious education teachers provided in this study was compiled as a final step in the process of this study. This guide was originally compiled in the summer of 1984 based upon the author's previous teaching experience and review of literature. The guide was photocopied and used as a supplemental text by lay religious education teachers instructing preschool through sixth grade in a small parish in Grand Forks, North Dakota. However, since the original guide was compiled, an extensive study has been underway to update, revise and compile additional information.

The revised, updated guide was compiled based on a comparison and contrast of information obtained through an extensive review of literature and interview results. The two areas of concentration for this study are lesson planning and teaching strategies. The guide for lay religious education teachers can be found on the following pages.

### Lesson Planning

The most important practical step in becoming an effective catechist is careful lesson planning. Lesson planning can be divided into three planning stages: long-range planning, short-range planning, and immediate-range planning.

Long Range Planning

Once the grade level has been assigned, textbooks delivered, and schedule of activities presented, the catechist should set aside an hour or two to thoroughly review the year's mission. This will include teacher's manual, student's book, parent's material, tests, hand-outs, games, media, etc. The general content area (sacraments, world religions) should be evident within the title of the text. The focus should now be drawn to the major themes and the basic teaching approach used throughout the program. This will make the catechist aware of and sensitive to newspaper or magazine articles, television programs, and materials which relate to the themes or topics throughout the lessons. A personal resource center can be created to store relevant materials gathered to support the lessons.

Short-Range Planning

Attention can now be focused on one major segment or division of the course. Materials can be collected and the background or direction of the unit begins to take shape. Developmental information should be available on the age level of the class. This will provide background information on the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual level of the class. Reflecting on this information as well as the special themes of the program will prepare the catechist for immediate lesson planning.

Immediate Planning

Immediate planning is planning for the actual lesson which will be taught each week. The lesson plan should have the following components:

1. Preparation
2. Goals and objectives
3. Development
4. Application
5. Prayers
6. Evaluation

## Preparation

The preparation of each lesson is essential. Advance time should be set aside by each catechist in order to prepare each lesson.

Read the lesson to be taught in BOTH the teacher's manual and the student's book. This gives the teacher a look at the lesson from the student's perspective.

Reflect on the theme of the lesson provided in the teacher's manual. Read the scripture passages over two or three times. Then ask: What message is to be conveyed to the child? What do I need to do for the child to help him comprehend the lesson? How can the child apply this lesson in his/her daily life?

Spend time in prayer about the lesson. Become aware of situations, feelings, materials, etc., which could be used to emphasize the lesson. Make a list of what is needed and begin gathering materials. The goals and objectives of the lesson can now be determined.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the lesson are what the teacher wants the child to know, understand and live at the end of the lesson. The reason why the child has come to class or the purpose of the lesson is

the goal and objective. The teacher's manual usually provides a theme. The teacher needs to use this theme as a base and modify or change it so a realistic goal is set and can be accomplished in the time provided for class.

Development

To develop the theme, the catechist needs to implement various teaching strategies. Scripture, stories, role-playing, drawing, film-strips, etc., can be incorporated into the lesson at this time. The flow of the different activities and the relationship to the theme of the lesson is of primary importance. An introduction to each activity is essential.

The development of the theme of the lesson begins with the DOCTRINE or the Church's teaching on the subject. This doctrine, or heritage, is the interpretation of an experience agreed upon by the Church as an orthodox and authentic expression of what we believe.

The development continues with scripture which reinforces the reason "why" the Church feels this theme or doctrine is important. Scripture also provides the historical background needed to convey the Church's teachings.

Incorporating various teaching strategies along with doctrine and scripture study will develop the lesson to its fullest potential. Most teacher's manuals suggest various techniques and strategies to relate the theme to the children.

Application

The application of the lesson is to show the students how the theme or message directly relates into their daily lives. The teacher should

ask, "How does this lesson apply to home, school, and church?"

The teacher may choose to model a situation or experience. The teacher shows how the theme directly relates to his/her life and then asks the students to discuss similar experiences.

The development of the theme and its application into the lives of the students is essential. Sharing authentic Church teachings in doctrine and scripture in such a way as they relate to everyday life, the lesson becomes meaningful and a challenge in the lives of the students.

Prayer

Through prayer, catechists are helping students enter into a relationship with God, our Father, with Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Prayer is essential to an effective lesson plan because it must be prepared, developed, and applied to the lesson. The class must feel God's presence in the room. Time scheduled for prayer at the beginning and end of class or in a spontaneous manner during class, will initiate a pattern of the importance of prayer in the lives of the students.

Evaluation

An evaluation should be completed after each lesson. It is at this time when the teacher should ask, "What went right?" "What went wrong?" "What did I like?" "What did the students like?" Honest evaluations promote growth on behalf of the teacher.

## Sample Lesson Plan I

### Preparation

Theme: Friends and friendship

Materials: Bible

Chalkboard or large writing paper

Markers

Paper, pencils, crayons

Pictures of people together in couples, groups, different nationalities, sexes, pets, handicaps, Jesus with disciples, service persons (fire-fighters, police persons)

### Goals and Objectives

1. The students will broaden their understanding of friends and friendships.
2. The students will look upon friends as a gift from God.
3. The students will seek to be friendly toward others regardless of race, color, handicaps, occupation, etc.

### Development

1. Next to our families, our friends are the closest and most important people in our lives. Jesus' interaction with his friends serves as our model.
2. Scripture readings:

   John 12: 1-8

   Luke 19:5

   Luke 17:12

3. Tell the story from Robert Frost's poem, "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors".
4. Discuss the rules needed in a friendship. Write them on the board.
5. Discuss what makes friends special. Write them on the board.
6. Who were Jesus' friends?

   Mary

   Martha

   Zaccheus

Application

1. How can you be a better friend to someone? List ways on board.
2. Look at pictures of groups of people and discuss how they might be friends to each other.
3. Write a note to a friend telling him/her why he/she is so special in our lives.

Prayer

Beginning of class:

Dear Lord, today we will be thinking and learning about our friends and people who we never knew were our friends. Please open our hearts and minds to receive Your message and show us by Your example, of what friendship is to be in our lives. For You are our eternal friend forever and ever.

Amen

End of class:

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for showing us the kind of friend You want us to be. Help us to extend a helping hand when it's needed, to share our possessions as well as ourselves with others and remember to love others as we love ourselves. We take a moment now to pray for our special friends . . . . We ask You to bless us until our next class.

Amen

Evaluation

1. Discussion of rules of friendship:
2. Discussion of what makes friends special:
3. Interest and understanding of the overall theme:
4. Discipline problems:
5. What went well? How could I improve the lesson?

## Sample Lesson Plan II

### Preparation

Theme: God's call to Abraham, and Abraham's total, immediate, trust-filled response to that call.

Materials: Bible

Chalkboard

Filmstrips - "Abraham"

Worksheets with "calls and responses"

### Goals and Objectives

1. The students will become familiar with one of the central themes of the Old Testament - "to be called by God"
2. The students will become sensitive to ways they are called in their own lives.

### Development

1. Over 4000 years ago God called a man named Abraham to lead his people and become the Father of Faith.
2. Abraham responded in a total, immediate and trust-filled way.
3. Write these three words on the board:

   total

   immediate

   trust-filled

   Discuss what each word means.
4. Scripture:

   Genesis 12: 1-9
5. Show filmstrip "Abraham"

Application

1. Pass out worksheets and read the "calls" aloud as the students circle their responses.
2. Have the students compare their results and explain their choices.
3. What is the risk involved in answering a call.
4. Who do you know that has been called by God? How do you know this? What is different about these people?

Prayer

Beginning of class:

Our Father

End of class:

- Psalm 62:6-9
- Ask for special prayers for those persons who have accepted God's call.
- Ask God to open our hearts and minds to hear His call if we have been chosen.

Evaluation

1. Did the students understand the concept of "call"?
2. How serious are they about the responses to the worksheet?
3. Do the children see persons in their own lives who have been called by God?
4. Was the filmstrip or the discussion more beneficial to the theme of the lesson?
5. Discipline problems?

## Helpful Hints for Lesson Planning

Careful preparation of your lesson will aid you in communicating the Lord's message because you will feel more secure and competent in front of the children. If you are well prepared and your lesson clips right along, the children will pay more attention; therefore, there will be less problems with discipline.

ONE RULE IN LESSON PLANNING IS THAT ONE HOUR OF TEACHING REQUIRES ONE HOUR OF PREPARATION.

You should always plan to teach more than you actually will end up using. Here are some practical points on getting your lesson prepared:

SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE TEACHING:

1. Sit down with the teacher's guide and the children's textbook and leisurely read through the lesson two or three times. Jot down the main ideas and write down the main theme. Tape this theme up somewhere where you will see it everyday and can think about how you are going to teach it.
2. Rewrite the lesson from the teacher's guide, using your own teaching plan and putting it in your own words.
   - check the learning experience or activity recommended. If you do not feel that it is suited for your class, then change it.
   - watch the vocabulary - change the words the children will not understand or decide how you will explain and define these words.
   - check to see what visual aids you are going to need and any materials for the activities. Start collecting these items or making them if they are not available.

3. Begin to pray daily that the Lord will aid you to understand the message, explain it clearly and be effective as his messenger to the students.
4. Do some research on an adult level about the points of doctrine in the lesson. Seek assistance from parish staff members or read additional material which would be helpful.
5. Work on your presentation, including all storeis you may need to tell.
   - if there is a story in the lesson - read it through jotting down the key idea or message and the sequence of events in the story.
   - re-read the message over and over and practice it until you can tell it clearly.
   - try out your story by telling it to your friends - they are great critics.
   - try using the visual aids you will need while practicing the presentation.
   - carefully review the learning experience so you will clearly understand its purpose and how to explain it to the students.

THE DAY BEFORE TEACHING:

1. Review the lesson and gather together all the visuals and materials you will be needing.
2. Plan your prayer for the lesson - what style and when you plan to pray during the class.
3. Review carefully the learning experience or activity.
4. Remind yourself of the attitude you want to inspire the children with through the presentation of the message.

5. Check to see if your plan covers these points:

goals and objectives

development

application

prayer

evaluation

MATERIALS

- what visual aids are you going to need, what materials are you going to need for the activity? colors, glue, scissors, paper, etc.?

PARENTS NOTES

- these are to be given out weekly for they provide the parents with printed message of the lesson their child is studying, further activities which can be celebrated at home, and a seasonal message from you, the teacher.

HOW TO USE AN HOUR'S TEACHING TIME COMBINING TEACHER-CENTERED AND STUDENT-CENTERED MOMENTS:

5 minutes - greet children and take attendance

10 minutes - scripture reading and prayer

10 minutes - introduction and development of the theme of the lesson

15 minutes - application of theme, learning experiencr or activity

10 minutes - questioning, discussion, summary, review

5 minutes - prayer

5 minutes - clean up and announcements (changes in schedule, items to bring next week, etc.) pass out parents notes.

## The Questions Children Ask

The retention of knowledge and the use of this knowledge is the goal of education. For a teacher, the number one tool to feel secure about his/her goal is in the form of questions.

Let's look at the question the child asks. Then there is the question the teacher asks. There is a great deal of difference between these two. The whole psychological pattern can be radically different.

What are some of the reaons why children ask questions? Listed below are some items to consider:

- to satisfy natural curiosity
- to obtain information
- to get attention
- to get assistance in solving a problem
- to test their own judgements
- to have personal contact with the teacher
- to clarify their viewpoint

The questions a particular child asks are like a mirror for the teacher. Through the child's questions, the teacher can see the personality and makeup of an individual.

The teacher should always answer the child's questions honestly. If the answer is not known then the teacher should admit it BUT promise that it will be looked into. The teacher should then make sure to find the answer to the questions and relate the answer to the entire class at the beginning of the next class.

In teaching religion, one of the most difficult problems the teacher faces is questions that children bring up about not understanding mysteries

of faith. Questions like: How can God be everywhere? How can there be three persons and only one God? How can Jesus be in that little piece of bread? There are many questions in religion that depend on FAITH ANSWERS and not rational, scientific-discovery processes. When questions are asked and you are unable to explain any more because the reality is beyond human understanding, the teacher should answer with something like this: "We just don't know for sure, but we believe it is so because God has told us, and He is so good He would never lie to us." This is not an excuse--it is the reality of the situation of one who looks through the eyes of faith at spiritual realities.

Above all, the teacher should always reflect on what kind of question the child is asking and what he/she is getting at before the teacher ventures to give an answer. Think first.

## Asking Questions to Children

Let's look at the art of asking questions to children. Some of the reasons why teachers should ask children questions are as follows:

- to keep children alert, interested and attentive
- to provide pupil activity
- to encourage the child to articulate intelligently with personal answers to the questions of the faith
- to check to see what level of understanding the children have
- to permit the children to express themselves and their feelings

Questions from the teacher help the children to:

- understand their faith and explain it
- believe the faith fully and know why they believe it
- appreciate the faith and know why they appreciate it

- apply their faith to their daily lives

Questions should be asked by teachers to stimulate these learning processes in the children:

1) QUESTIONS THAT HELP THEM TO REMEMBER:

These questions must be based on materials or information which has already been presented to the children. These are fact questions like who, what, when, where, and how.

2) QUESTIONS THAT HELP THEM REASON:

These are questions based on "why" - they challenge the student to translate things he remembers into his own thought patterns.

3) QUESTIONS THAT HELP THEM EVALUATE:

These questions encourage the students to share their views and opinions with others and to place themselves into the situations being questioned.

4) QUESTIONS THAT HELP THEM TO THINK CREATIVELY:

These are open-ended questions that often have no answer. This type of question permits the student to involve his background, understanding and experience. The teacher should promote the feeling that no answer is incorrect.

Let's take the example of the study of the Good Samaritan that Jesus told (Luke 10: 25-37) and phrase a question for each of these types mentioned:

1) REMEMBERING QUESTION: Where was the man in the story going? What happened to this man? Who hurt him? How many people passed him by?

2) REASONING QUESTION: Why did the Samaritan stop and help the man? Why did Jesus tell the story?

3) EVALUATING QUESTION: What would you do if you saw a kid on the playground crying because a bunch of guys had hit him and called him names?

4) CREATIVE THINKING QUESTION: What makes some people be kind and helpful to others? What makes some people hurt others? Do they have a right to do this?

RULES FOR GOOD QUESTIONING:

1. State the question clearly and concisely.
2. Direct the question to the entire class so that everyone is attentive.
3. Adapt the questions to the background and experience of the children.
4. State the question only once.
5. Distribute the questions around the class.
6. Frequently address questions to inattentive pupils.
7. Question in a manner that calls for thinking and reasoning.
8. Pace the questions according to the purpose of the activity.
9. Show interest in pupil's questions.
10. Answer and remark positively to wrong answers.

USE ALL QUESTIONS TO:

- acquire understanding - WHAT
- acquire application - HOW
- acquire motivation - WHY

## Discussion

Discussion, whether it be between teacher and students, students and students, or both, is the application of knowledge and how that knowledge is interpreted or inplied to each one in the class personally. Discussion goes beyond the art of asking questions. It is a group process with all members participating.

In order to have high quality discussions, the appropriate atmosphere must be created. The students need to feel a sense of security and trust with the teachers and classmates and an understanding that their questions, responses, and comments will be respected. One rule which is very beneficial to a discussion is the following: all questions will be considered for discussion as long as the asker genuinely wants to know the answer. This eliminates nonsense or disrespectful questions.

The teacher must be the model for this behavior. He/She must respond to all questions honestly and in a positive manner. If a question becomes too personal, the students or teacher need to express themselves so the asker understands that you would prefer to not discuss that matter, experience, or whatever at this time. This should not stop the discussion. The teacher needs to be prepared for this occurrence and continue the discussion without any loss of esteem to the respondent.

Usually, the responses to the questions generate further questions which continues the discussion. For a discussion to be successful, a high level of questioning must be attained. Design the questions to excite, inspire, encourage and arouse the students to think. Two types of quesions are successful for discussions:

1. Personal level questions. These questions are not invading a person's privacy; however, they relate to a person's own life experiences. These questions can effectively engage expressing and acting on concerns the students relate to personally.

Examples of personal level questions based upon the parable of the Prodical Son:

1. If you had been the younger son in this parable, how would you have felt as you were walking back to your father?
2. What were the father's feelings when the younger son left home?
3. What were the father's feelings when the younger son returned home?
4. What are some times when you have been forgiven by someone? How did you feel?

2. Analytical questions. These questions require students to think before they speak. There are not right or wrong answers. The ideas and ideals the students express should be accepted. These questions help the students shape self-expression, personal viewpoints and values.

Examples of analytical questions based on the parable of the Prodical Son:

1. What do you think this parable teaches us about the relationship between God and ourselves, our families, our classmates?
2. Why was the relationship between the father and his sons so important?
3. Why did Jesus tell this parable?

Discussions can take place in large groups or small groups. Often the small group discussion is most successful. Generally, the students are more comfortable expressing themselves in small groups.

A facilitator should be chosen for each group. Expressions made on the part of the students should be written on a chalkboard or large size paper. A different person can be chosen or asked to do the writing. The students need to understand the goal of the discussion. In fifteen minutes, respond to the following questions and write your responses on this paper to share with the entire class. Respond to all the questions.

When the discussion time is over, the small groups come together into one large group and share their responses. Further discussion can continue if time allows. As class continues, keep the students' expressions within sight for further reference and to show the worthiness of the project.

## Formal Prayers

The Catholic Church has a beautiful and rich tradition of certain prayers which have come down to each generation over the centuries. These forms of prayers are valuable for several reasons:

- they permit us to pray when perhaps our spirit is such that we cannot spontaneously speak with God.
- they unite all of us together as individuals permitting us to pray the same prayer together as a group.

Children need to learn these special prayers of the Church. THEY NEED TO LEARN WHAT THE PHRASES OF THE PRAYER MEAN. Always teach the

formal prayers of the Church and at the same time teach each word and phrase of the prayer. Here is a sample of what you could tell the children about the Hail Mary and its words:

HAIL MARY

1. Hail Mary
2. Full of grace
3. The Lord is with you
4. Blessed art thou among women
5. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
6. Holy Mary
7. Mother of God
8. Pray for us sinners
9. Now, and at the hour of our death
10. Amen

1. Hello, Mary
2. Lots of God's love
3. God loves you
4. Mary is special to God
5. God loves His son, Jesus
6. Mary is good and loving
7. Mary's son, Jesus, is God
8. Help us to love God as you do
9. Today and always
10. I really mean it

When praying together in class, pause between the phrases for a second of silent reflection.

The Mass

It is important for the children to learn the prayers and responses for the Mass, since participation by everyone at Mass is essential to good liturgy. Go over the prayers and responses with the children. Practice the prayers with the children by reading the parts of the priest and having the children answer the people's parts. Explain to them what the prayers and responses mean.

The Rosary

This beautiful and meaningful devotion to the Mother of God should be taught to each child. Besides learning the method of praying the rosary and the prayers needed, the child needs to be taught what the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries are. The children should learn by heart all the mysteries of the rosary and how to think of the events as they pray. The object of praying is to meditate on the life of Our Lord and His Mother.

A practical way to teach the mysteries of the rosary is to show the children a picture of the story behind each mystery (or draw a chalk-talk picture of it) and tell them briefly the story of the mystery; then, after telling them the story, pray with them the Our Father, ten Hail Mary's and the Glory Be. This way, the learning and praying go along together.

## Informal Prayers

Children have a deep ability to learn to pray in their own words. All they need is a little guidance from the teacher and they can "speak to God." You as the teacher will be aiding their life with Christ

Patterns for Praying

A. Repetitive Response: The teacher prays and the whole class repeats each phrase orally.

B. Litany: Teacher reads the phrases of the prepared prayer-litany, and the children respond with a response such as "Lord, hear us. . . , or Lord, have mercy."

C. Song/Silence/Summation: Listen in silence to a song on a record. Ask the children to close their eyes and spend half a minute silently thinking about the message. Then the teacher sums up the thought in a prayer which has been prepared which follows the message of the song.

D. Poem/Silence/Summation: This is the same procedure as in pattern C; however, the teacher reads a short poem instead of listening to a song.

E. Song: Simply let the children sing a song, introducing and closing it with the sign of the cross so that they remember and appreciate that a song sung for God can be a beautiful prayer.

F. Student Composition: The children can make up their own prayers either individually or in small groups in the upper grades. It is usually best to let them write the words down and then read their prayers to the class.

G. Picture/Response: Show the children a striking picture. Let them silently think and pray about its meaning and come up with one word that expresses their feelings. Then let each child share his/her word.

H. Scripture Reading/Summation: Read a short selection from a modern translation of the Scripture aloud to the children. Pause for a moment of silence. Then, sum up the reading with a short prayer prepared by the teacher.

I. Object Prayer: Encourage the children to use an inanimate object in the room as a key word in their prayer. For example: ERASER: "Lord, help me to erase from my heart and mind the nasty thoughts I have of other people." DOOR: "Jesus, show me the way to open the door of my heart to people who are different than myself."

J. Round Robin Prayer: The children sit in a circle. The teacher begins by saying the first word of the prayer such as "Thank." The child on her left will usually say "you." Then the next child will say "God," "for," etc. When a child feels the prayer should come to an end, the child says "Amen." Then the prayer is repeated by each child saying the word he gave to the prayer.

K. Imaging Prayer: Have the children close their eyes, sit in a comfortable upright position, take a couple of deep breaths, and be very quiet inside. Lead them into mentally visualizing their favorite, quiet place to be and then have Jesus come to visit them.

Power of Prayer Buttons

Make a ceremony of awarding one to each "prayer person." Fasten the button with masking tape. This will help the children overcome shyness and encourages participation in prayer.

## Visual Aids

Here are a few ideas on some very useful forms of visual aids which lend themselves to pupil participation. All of these aids can be made easily with less expense incurred.

### Friezes and Murals

To make a frieze you need a long piece of paper, either butcher paper or shelf paper. Put the long piece of paper up on the wall with masking tape. Use a crayola or felt-tip pen to mark off panels along the paper so that you divide it into sections--as many as you need.

Then you draw the word that you want on each panel. You can cut out magazine pictures and paste them on each panel section also.

The value of a frieze is that you can visually develop a subject or theme. You can even roll up the paper to the point where you want the students to see the picture and tape it on the board rolled up. Then as you progress in developing the theme, you can unroll the paper to each successive section. Here are some examples:

-mark off seven sections of the paper and use each section for one of the seven sacraments.

-mark off five sections and have each one tell about one cure that Jesus worked.

A mural is the same idea of a long piece of paper on the wall. However, the entire mural should be of the same subject without dividing off sections. Children can easily make these friezes and murals as an educational activity after you have presented the lesson. You can tape the paper up and the children can work on it on the wall. You can cut

the paper into sections and have the children work together in teams on a particular section. After they are done, you simply tape the sections together to form the mural or frieze.

If you use magazines instead of the children drawing, they can cut the pictures they want to put on the frieze or mural and then go up and paste them on the paper. Using regular typing paper (and if magazines, the pictures from smaller types like Good Housekeeping, Time, Ladies Home Journal), the children can make "personal" murals or friezes at their seats by taping different pieces of paper together. They can take their own little frieze home with them.

Posters

Posters should be used to motivate the children to live like Christ. You can make the poster as a teaching aid or the children can make one as a learning activity. Either use regular store-bought poster board or cover a large piece of cardboard from a box with white shelf paper. Great posters can be made by cutting out magazine pictures and pasting them on and then lettering the posters with crayolas or felt-tip pens.

Using just a piece of white paper, children can make their own personal poster at their seats to take home with them. Here are a couple of examples:

-Fill a poster with pictures from magazines of happy faces and then write across the top of the poster: Jesus wants us to be friends.

-Fill a poster with magazine pictures of everything in creation--flowers, animals, faces, trees, birds, etc. Write at the top of the poster: God's Gifts.

Banners

Using a clothes hanger and long pieces of burlap or other material and cutting letters and figures out of felt cloth, the children can make beautiful banners like they would make posters. Many churches use large banners to decorate their sanctuary for the liturgy. Small pieces of the burlap can be given to each child and he can make his own small banner to take home and hang up in his room. Any motivating words and theme can be used.

One idea for a banner is the following:

-Shining a light from a slide projector on a child, trace their silhouette on a sheet of paper, then cut out the picture on a piece of felt. Under the child's silhouette could read: God Gave Us Suzie. This project could be completed in two lessons and possibly an aid would be needed to trace the pictures while a lesson is being taught to the other children.

Flipcharts

This teaching aid is very handy since it can be prepared ahead of time and used year after year. A flipchart is used to develop a theme by having a different aspect of the theme on each page. As you are presenting the theme, you simply flip from page to page in your spiral book. You do not have to be an artist. You can use magazine pictures on the pages and write on them with felt-tip pens. A large spiral drawing pad is easy to carry around with you.

An example of a four page flipchart would be on the theme: How to be like Jesus:

-Page 1: At Home - Draw or paste a picture of a child helping someone at home.

- Page 2: At School - Draw or paste a picture of a child.

- Page 3: At Church

- Page 4: At Play

## Films, Filmstrips and Slides

Of all the projected teaching aids that can be found, the three easiest to use and probably more available to the average class are films, filmstrips, and slides.

Below is a list of pointers on how to utilize these visual aids:

1. Always preview the film or filmstrip personally before it is shown to your class. By previewing, you can check to see if the film is in good condition, up-to-date, and communicates the message you desire. Other items to check for are:

   a. Is the color or the picture vivid and clear?

   b. Is it artistically and professionally done?

   c. Is it appealing and motivating?

   d. Is it challenging to the imagination?

   e. Will it invoke meaningful responses in your students?

2. Remember that the attention span of children in the early grades is short so take into consideration the length of the film or filmstrips.

3. Audio visual presentations should only be used occasionally to add spice to the lesson and a change in routine.

4. Before showing the material, set the mood by briefly reviewing for the students what they are to look for in the film.

5. Have the equipment (projector, film, extension cord, screen, etc.) all set up and ready to roll before class begins. Check carefully before class to make sure the projector works and that the light bulb is in good working condition. Keep on hand an extra light bulb in case it burns out during the presentation. Make sure the sound works on movie projectors and filmstrip projectors that have record players or cassette players attached.

6. A film, filmstrip or slide presentation should not be used as an excuse for an unprepared lesson. It should be part of your lesson; not the whole lesson. It is a visual aid--not a teacher.

7. If you do not have a regular screen to show the film on, you can always tape a sheet on the wall or use a white wall if the room has one.

8. Most filmstrips come with a record or cassette which gives the sound to the presentation. However, the filmstrip can be used effectively simply as a series of pictures which you turn on the screen. You listen to the record or cassette (or use the script booklet if it has one) and take down notes on each picture of the filmstrip. Then have a child turn the pictures while you stand up next to the screen and tell the children about each picture. This way you can pause at any picture you want and discuss it with the children as long as you like.

9. When using films, you will often find it helpful if, after discussion time, you rerun the film so that the class can review their thoughts again.

10. You can use your own slides from vacations, family outings, relatives, etc., to build a beautiful program on a special theme. It helps set religion into a real life context. The children can also either bring slides from home or in the upper grades, even take their own pictures. Then they can sit down and create a program deciding on which slides to use and write their own script.

## Creative Drawing

Drawing is for a child the most natural of impulses. The child is motivated to put his whole self into the process of learning. His whole mental, emotional, and spiritual self must be brought into play if what is taught is to remain deep within his knowledge.

Children desire to understand the fullness of their experience and they work this out by talking, drawing, and playing their experiences. Drawing is of special importance in religious teaching because it gives the child the opportunity to express things that he would never be able to express in words. Often a child needs a more creative and personalized way of expressing himself. The very shy child who does not respond in class will produce in a drawing a depth of understanding and feelings that he/she is unable to share verbally.

The drawing of a child is a mirror into the complexity of his mind and feelings. It is one of the most successful ways for the teacher to come to some understanding of the image that the child has of himself, of God, of life around him, and of other people.

To let the child freely draw whatever he wants calls into play his imagination, intelligence, memory, power of observation, and will. This

is why the technique is so valuable. It permits the religious message to affect the totality of the child in a lasting way.

You can see in children's drawings that they have a real ability at reducing complex and difficult ideas that they may have been taught by the teacher into simple symbols or pictures that they can understand and appreciate.

God is real to little children. He is as real as everything around them. He is easily seen as a real person who loves them and whom they love. This is the way they draw Him and the way they talk about and to Him.

Here are a couple of descriptions of God from the words of little children--descriptions that they put into drawings:

> "God has a blue beard. It is all rumpled up because He likes to be playful."

> "God is as big as this room. He reaches from the earth to the sky. He is as big as this house. He has very big ears so He can hear everyone and He has long feet so He can run very fast."

When a child draws, he is interested in the content of the drawing instead of the harmony of the colors, style, or form. If Jesus has a green beard, the teacher should be interested in why the child chose green. It could be the child's favorite color which would tell you how she/he feels about Jesus. The teacher should encourage this child to continue to be creative and share his thoughts about Jesus in pictures.

You will notice that there are several things that children almost always put into any drawing. These things are especially appealing to them: light, people, animals, houses, and flowers.

Practical Points for Drawing in Religion Classes

WHO: The ages between 7 and 10 are the key ages for drawing. Older

children often feel they can't draw and are more excited about being able to cut from magazines and paste on paper to form their "drawing."

WHEN TO DRAW: Right after the catechism talk on the lesson or story. Always give the instructions before you hand out the materials. Repeat the instructions often to remind the children what they are supposed to do.

MOOD FOR DRAWING: If a child is to be creative, he must be given the opportunity to think, and this requires a mood by which the children are whispering and quietly working. The teacher should distribute the materials to the children so they feel they are important and the activity is important.

TIME TO BE ALLOWED AND MATERIALS TO BE USED: About half an hour should be allowed so that the children do not feel rushed when drawing. If one child finishes early, let him do something else to keep his interest, or simply draw another picture. This should be handled personally on a one-to-one basis.

Always use regular size, 8½ by 11 paper. Always use colors or paint, NEVER a simple pencil. The child can draw the picture first with pencil but then he should color it in. If each child does not have his own box of crayons or markers, two or three children can share one large box. The best colors are yellow, green, red, blue, and brown or black.

WHAT TO DRAW: Let the children draw about the story you told. Ask them to draw what they liked about the story. Let the children be creative. Always ask the children to share with you personally

what he or she has drawn. With older children, let them write a commentary on the back of the picture. Before class has ended, ask anyone if they would like to share with the whole class their picture.

The teacher could either sit and draw a picture with the class or walk around and encourage the children who may be having difficulty. The questions you ask will be the key to motivating the child to participate in the activity. The children need to see the teacher actively involved in the lesson!!

## Writing

Writing facilitates faith-training by providing a means for students to express in a permanent manner significant feelings and ideas about a particular topic or experience. The style of writing (story, poem, prayer, etc.) can be achieved when the student combines his background experiences with new faith experiences; therefore, growing and providing a written memory to recall from and relate to at a later time. Remember, writing as with drawing or discussion is an expression of one's personal identity and should be respected.

The following are suggestions to keep in mind when providing a writing experience:

1. "Read the students" - know their background, interests, expectations, ideals, etc.
2. Create a writing mood by using a picture for focus, soft music for listening, etc.
3. Give the students ample time for the activity; time to begin, to write and to complete the project.

4. Spell words for the students only when they ask.
5. Write along with the students on the same topic and at the same time. This shows the class the activity is considered important.
6. Ask the students to share their writing with the class. As the teacher, share your writing as a model for further ideas and examples of styles and content.
7. Publish or exhibit the students' writing.
8. Maintain a list of suggested topics which pertain to the themes of the lessons.
9. Promote different writing styles:
   a. personal experiences
   b. poems (rhyming and not rhyming)
   c. stories
   d. prayers (see examples under Prayer)
   e. titles for drawings
   f. explanations of Bible passages: this parable means to me . . . .
   g. relate personal feelings and expressions to the life of Christ:
      1. birth
      2. baptism
      3. family
      4. friends
      5. enemies
      6. death
      7. resurrection
   h. words to songs.

## Flannelgraph and Puppets

### Flannelgraph

This creative teaching aid is one of the most fascinating for children that you will find. They love it. It is fabulous for keeping their attention and retention.

The technique uses a piece of flannel mounted on a piece of cardboard or simply tapes to the chalkboard or wall. The paper figures should be backed with a fuzzy surface. The figures cling to the flannel.

The piece of flannel should be at least a yard long. You should use light green, light blue or tan flannel. Dark colors make a bad background and white gives off a glare. The flannelgraph can be used in this manner:

- to tell a story
- to review a story
- to summarize a lesson
- to motivate the children
- to be a part of the learning activity

You can make your own flannelgraph figures by cutting pictures out of magazines and glue the back of them with light cardboard or construction paper and then put flannel or sandpaper on the back of the construction paper. Often the construction paper is fuzzy enough to use by itself. Paper dolls can be backed with flannel or sandpaper and used for flannel figures. The children can make their own flannel figures and make up little presentations to show to the rest of the class.

IMPORTANT: You need to practice placing the figures on the flannel while telling the story at the same time. The presentation should be smooth and this often takes practice at first.

Puppets

Young children love puppets. You should have a puppet on hand at all times, you can pull it out, stick in on your hand, and tell the story that you are using in your lesson. The children are fascinated watching the puppet "tell the story." You can hand the puppet to one of the children and have them come up and "retell the story." You will find that some of the shyest children will respond to this since they feel that it really isn't themselves but the puppet who is "telling the story."

There are many different puppets that the children can easily make in the classroom and then use to reteach the lesson. You can make a hand, finger, paperbag or sock puppet.

One of the great ways to use puppets is in applying the teaching of your lesson to the daily living of the children. For example, if I explained that Jesus taught us to love our neighbor, then during activity time, the children can write simple little skits about times when it was difficult to love others. Each one then uses a puppet and comes up and "acts out" their stories. This is very creative and the children really learn the lesson because they are taking an active part and sharing something about themselves.

Three Simple Styles of Homemade Puppets

Finger Puppets: Cut out clothes and hats out of construction paper. Glue or tape them onto the child's fingers. Use the tip of the finger as the face and draw the eyes, nose, and mouth with felt-tip pen.

Paper-bag Puppets: Using a small grocery bag, draw a face on the bag so that the mouth is located on the flap. Then put your hand into the bag and tuck it into the flap. When you open and close your hand, the flap will move up and down and the puppet will look like it is talking.

Stick Puppets: Cut a figure out of a magazine and glue it to a popcicle stick. Holding onto the bottom of the stick, the puppet will then move up and down.

## Card Games

Any game or learning experience that is used to teach information to children in school can be adapted to teach children information about our faith. One technique to use in bringing fun into this learning is to make card games which two children can play together. Listed below is the process for making card games:

1. Make TWO sets of cards for each topic. One set has a word or phrase of the topic on it and the other set has a matching word or phrase for each card.
2. Each card should be numbered at the top and its matching card should have the same number. This helps the children match the cards in the game.

3. You must always have an equal number of cards. For example, if you are going to have a set of cards on the seven sacraments, you will have an eighth card. This eighth card could be the word "sacrament" with a matching card defining sacrament in general.
4. Use different colored 3 X 5 cards for each set, or on white 3 X 5 cards, use one color ink for set number one and another color ink for its matching set.
5. Two children can play at one time. They take one set of cards and mix them up and put them face down on the table. This is the set they draw from. The matching set of cards is then dealt out. Each one places the cards he has been dealt down in front of him in numerical order. Then he draws from the deck. If the card he draws has its match in the cards before him, then he keeps the card, placing it on top of his match. If the other person has the matching card, then he has to give the drawn card to the other person. The child having all his cards matched at the end of the round wins the game.
6. When the child draws the card, he must read out loud what the card says and if it matches one of his cards, he must read the matching card also.
7. When the game is over, they can mix up one of the sets and deal out the other set and start over.
8. At least in the intermediate and upper grades, the students can make the lists of the phrases off the cards and make the cards themselves.

Here is an example of cards for a Game on the Sacraments:

First Set of Cards

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1<br>THE SACRAMENTS | 2<br>BAPTISM | 3<br>CONFIRMATION | 4<br>PENANCE |
| 5<br>HOLY EUCHARIST | 6<br>HOLY ORDERS | 7<br>ANOINTING THE SICK | 8<br>MATRIMONY |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1<br>SIGNS THAT GIVE US GOD'S LOVE | 2<br>CHRIST HELPS US TO BEGIN OUR FRIEND-SHIP WITH HIM | 3<br>CHRIST HELPS US TO BE GOOD AND WITNESS TO HIM | 4<br>CHRIST FOR-GIVES OUR SINS AND ACCEPTS OUR FRIENDSHIP AGAIN |
| 5<br>CHRIST FEEDS US OF HIMSELF AND LINKS ALL OF US TO HIM AND TO EACH OTHER | 6<br>CHRIST GIVES A MAN HIS POWER TO BECOME A PRIEST | 7<br>CHRIST HELPS A SICK PERSON GET WELL PHYS-ICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY | 8<br>CHRIST UNITES A MAN AND A WOMAN IN LOVE AND MARRIAGE |

11. Help us to be good

12. I really mean it

THE COMMANDMENTS

| First card: | Second card: |
|---|---|
| 1. 1st Commandment | 1. I must honor God |
| 2. 2nd Commandment | 2. I must always use God's name with respect |
| 3. 3rd Commandment | 3. I must worship God on Sundays |
| 4. 4th Commandment | 4. I must be obedient and kind at home |
| 5. 5th Commandment | 5. I must always be kind and treat others nicely |
| 6. 6th Commandment | 6. I must be pure in all I say, hear, see, and do |
| 7. 7th Commandment | 7. I must be honest |
| 8. 8th Commandment | 8. I must be truthful in all things I say |
| 9. 9th Commandment | 9. I must be pure in all I think and wish |
| 10. 10th Commandment | 10. I must be satisfied and not jealous |

## Using the Chalkboard

The teaching aid which is most available for any teacher is the chalkboard/newsprint. If not, a relatively good-size one can be carried around. Let's look at some specifics on how to utilize the chalkboard in the most efficient way:

Efficient use of the chalkboard:

- listing facts and information on the lesson
- stating the theme for today's lesson
- putting up a brief outline of the lesson
- writing the key words
- putting up new words and their definitions

The following are more samples of phrases you could put on cards:

OUR FATHER

First card:

1. Our Father
2. Who art in heaven
3. Hallowed be Thy name
4. Thy kingdom come
5. Thy will be done
6. On earth, as it is in heaven
7. Give us this day our daily bread
8. And forgive us our trespasses
9. As we forgive those who trespass against us
10. And lead us not into temptation
11. But deliver us from evil
12. Amen

Second card:

1. Loving, kind, forgiving
2. Where everyone is happy with God
3. God's name is special
4. God will love us always
5. God wants us to be good
6. Everywhere
7. Love us each day
8. Forgive us when we are bad
9. Help us forgive and love anyone who is mean to us
10. Help us not to be bad

- drawing simple maps, diagrams, etc.
- recording the students' ideas during a discussion
- writing questions for review or testing
- drawing simple figures to tell the story - this is known as "chalk-talk"

Chalk-Talk: You do not have to be an artist to draw simple stick figures. The children's imaginations fill in what you leave out.

You can also use a method known as "punch-hole pattern." Cut out a picture from a coloring book or workbook you want to use. Using a needle, straight pin, or hole punch, punch holes about one-quarter inch apart around the border of the pattern. Place the pattern against the blackboard and using a dusty eraser, rub across the pattern. This will leave a dusty pattern of dots on the board which you then fill in by drawing with the chalk from dot to dot.

Another method is simply to take the pattern and trace around it with chalk.

## Additional Craft Ideas

### Mobiles

Cut different figures or shapes or patterns from different colored construction paper. Punch holes in the top and tie thread through the holes. Hang the different shapes on different lengths of thread from a coat hanger.

Words to Live and Love By

Using large letter stencils, have each child choose a word (communion, baptism, love, family, their own name, etc.), and using construction paper, trace the letters and cut out two of each letter. Then glue the letters to yarn so they hang down and spell out the word. The children can hang them up from the ceiling of their room.

Rebus Stories

This creative little activity has the children draw a picture for certain words in a story. You write the story on a large piece of paper leaving blanks for the pictures. Let the children know what word should go in the blank. These words are the ones they replace with a picture. They copy the whole story drawing in the pictures. Here is a sample sentence:

Jesus dies on a _____(cross) ____(for) us. ____(I) ____(love) Him.

Stained-Glass Windows

Take different colors of tissue paper and cut designs or patterns or shapes. Lay down a piece of newspaper. On top of the newspaper lay the size of sheet of waxed paper that you want for the window. Place the tissue pieces on the waxed paper leaving some waxed paper between the pieces of tissue paper. Lay another piece of waxed paper carefully on top. Cover this with one sheet of newspaper. Iron on top with a warm iron. The iron melts the wax paper together. Then make a frame of construction paper and paste the waxed paper picture behind it; or,

Draw a picture on a piece of white paper with a pencil. Then go over the lines with dark felt-tip pen. Color the picture completely

with crayon. Color it heavily. Use just one bright color in each space. Lay the picture down on a sheet of butcher paper. Use cotton or a tissue and wet the back of the picture completely with salad oil. Wipe off the extra oil with cotton or tissue. Put a dark frame of construction paper around the picture. Let the children take the pictures home to hang in their windows.

## DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

Discipline falls under two main areas of classroom management; these areas are routine and rules. The class routine is set up by the teacher. It should be followed regularly with slight deviations. This helps the child "settle in" and know what to expect. The child becomes comfortable and relaxed and excited with the activity which is coming next. For example, the child can prepare for prayertime by putting away materials and quietly sitting in the prayer corner.

Each classroom must have rules. These are boundaries by which the children understand what they can and cannot do. With guidance from the teacher, the children can makeup and decide upon their own class rules. Each child is allowed to offer what he/she feels will make the class run more smoothly and not infringe on each others rights. To begin, you could state the one rule they are usually familiar with: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Discuss with the class what this rule means and how they can apply it to their classroom. Then ask the children for specific examples. List the rules on a chalkboard or large piece of paper so everyone can see them written out. When every child has offered a rule, discuss if they are all fair, too strict, or too lenient. Once the class reaches a consensus, explain

that these rules belong to this class and each student must abide with them. Remind the children that you, the teacher, have the right to veto or change a rule which does not seem to be fair to each child.

Display the rules for the first couple of classes to remind the children what rules they have chosen. The advantage of this is that the children have actively participated in decision making and have taken responsibility for their actions. From the beginning they see they are an essential part of the class and its activities.

The teacher must be thoroughly prepared for each lesson; this includes additional activities. The importance of this preparation has a direct effect on discipline in the classroom. The more secure you feel with the material, the more confidence you will exhibit to the children.

Being well-prepared, positive in your attitude and state clear, concise directions, the children will be more content and less apt to look for distractions. Be firm, brief and positive with your directions. Always speak in a calm voice, speak directly to the children, give the children choices and answer their questions. Let the children know what you expect and be consistent.

APPENDIX A

Interview Instrument

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

RESPONDENT: _____, Religious Educator.

INTRODUCTION: I am preparing to write a manual on the most effective lesson plan and teaching strategies which can be used in the religious education class of 10-30 children for one hour, one day a week.

QUESTION 1: In order to effectively teach a lesson in religious education to an elementary class of 10-30 children one hour, one day a week, what steps are essential in developing an effective lesson plan?

QUESTION 2: Do you feel that differences in grade level or age of the class plays a significant role in how a lesson plan should be structured?

QUESTION 3: In this particular setting, which specific teaching strategies would be most appropriate or effective in order to teach the subject matter?

QUESTION 4: In your own personal experience as a religious educator, what specific teaching strategies do you feel have been the most effective?

QUESTION 5: Are there any additional comments you would like to make which you feel will be helpful in preparing this manual?

# INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

RESPONDENT: _____ Professional Educator

INTRODUCTION: I am preparing to write a manual on the most effective lesson plan and teaching strategies which can be used in a classroom of 10-30 children for one hour, one day a week.

QUESTION 1: In order to effectively teach a lesson to an elementary class of 10-30 children for one hour, one day a week, what steps are essential in developing an effective lesson plan?

QUESTION 2: Do you feel that differences in grade level or age of the class plays a significant role in how a lesson plan should be structured?

QUESTION 3: In this particular setting, which specific teaching strategies would be most appropriate or effective in order to teach the subject matter?

QUESTION 4: If the lesson being taught was in the subject area of religious education, what would you do differently to effectively plan a lesson?

QUESTION 5: If the lesson being taught was in the subject area of religious education, what teaching strategies would you think would be most appropriate or effective?

QUESTION 6: Are there any additional comments you would like to make which you feel will be helpful in preparing this manual?

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